



**Request for Applications**  
RFA # 006-PDG-2021



**TITLE:** **Preschool Development Grant B-5 (PDG B-5) Renewal Grant State-Level Family Engagement and Leadership**

**FUNDING AGENCY:** NC DHHS/Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)

**ISSUE DATE:** July 7, 2021

**RECEIPT DEADLINE:** Applications, subject to the following conditions, must be received no later than **5:00 pm August 6, 2021.**

**EMAIL an electronic PDF of your application to the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education via this email:** [DCDEE.PDGContracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:DCDEE.PDGContracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov).

The signature of an authorized official is required on the application face sheet. An electronic signature or an electronic scanned copy of the signed application face sheet will be accepted. **Only electronic application submissions via email will be accepted, i.e., do not mail, fax, or deliver copies of the application to DCDEE's physical or mailing address.**

**INTENT TO APPLY:** Eligible agencies and/or organizations interested in applying for this Request for Applications (RFA) are encouraged to notify DCDEE of their intent to apply via the following link, <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/J7JJBV9> no later than **5:00 pm July 16, 2021.** Agencies are **not** required to notify of their intent to respond to this RFA; this information is requested to assist DCDEE in planning.

**DIRECT ALL INQUIRIES** concerning this RFA in writing to:  
Tilneil Gary, PDG Grant Manager  
Email address: [DCDEE.PDGContracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:DCDEE.PDGContracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov)

Sharon Johnson, PDG Contracts Manager  
Email address: [DCDEE.PDGContracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:DCDEE.PDGContracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov)

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Questions concerning the specifications, or any information contained within this Request for Applications must be received no later than **5:00 pm July 16, 2021.** All questions must be received in writing, via email to: [DCDEE.PDGContracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:DCDEE.PDGContracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov). Responses to all questions received by the deadline will be posted on the Division of Child Development and Early Education website <https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Whats-New> no later than **5:00 pm on July 23, 2021.**

**ELIGIBILITY:** This RFA is open to state agencies and universities, public and private nonprofit organizations with a current 501(c)(3) standing with expertise in research of state-level family engagement and leadership strategies; experience in designing professional development for family serving organizations and facilitating virtual conferences for a variety of early childhood stakeholders including parents, families, and service providers; and possess knowledge of North Carolina’s early childhood education mixed delivery system.

**FUNDING AVAILABILITY:** A contract will be awarded from this RFA beginning September 15, 2021 through September 14, 2022, with the opportunity to extend for up to an additional 15 months from September 15, 2022 through December 30, 2023, depending on the availability of funds. A total of \$175,000 is immediately available for the initial funding period; additional funding may be available through December 30, 2023. Should a carry forward or no cost extension option be granted to DCDEE by the federal funder, the same option will be available to the contractor.

Please note, the funding period and amounts are projected and may be adjusted in alignment with the approved federal budget and budget period.

**Preschool Development Grant B-5 Renewal Grant Funding Source:**

1. Funding Type	Discretionary
2. Federal Award Identification Number (FAIN)	90TP0056-02-00
3. Federal Award Date (see § 200.39 Federal award date)	12/03/2020
4. Total Amount of the Federal Award (awarded to DCDEE)	\$13,414,500
5. Federal award project description, as required to be responsive to the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA)	PDG B-5 Renewal Grants seek to empower state governments to lead the way in leveraging federal, state and local early care and education investments. Renewal grants will assist states in helping low-income and disadvantaged children to enter kindergarten prepared to succeed. In addition, these grants will help improve the transitions between early care and education settings and elementary school. The overall responsibility of the PDG B-5 Renewal Grant is to assist states in the coordination of existing early childhood funding streams, resulting in services being provided to more children birth

	through five in a mixed delivery system.
6. Name of Federal awarding agency, pass-through entity, and contact information for awarding official	Federal DHHS Office Administration for Children and Families NC DHHS/DCDEE 333 Six Forks Road Raleigh, North Carolina 27609
7. CFDA Number and Name; the pass-through entity must identify the dollar amount made available under each Federal award and the CFDA number at the time of disbursement	CFDA# 93.434 ESSA Preschool Development Grants Birth Through Five
8. Identification of whether the award is R&D	No

**Federal Requirements on indirect cost rates and calculations according to 2 C.F.R. 200.414:**

1. If your agency has or establishes a Federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (FNIR), then the agency is not allowed to charge the “de minimis” rate of 10% (or some other amount) for indirect costs, as directed by 2 C.F.R. 200.414(f).
2. Agencies with an FNIR are required to charge their agreed upon rate for their indirect costs and include cost items as determined by the FNIR in their indirect costs.
3. If your agency does not have and never had a FNIR, then your agency is allowed to negotiate a different rate or the “de minimis,” as per 2 C.F.R. 200.414(f).
4. Negotiation of indirect cost rates in excess of the “de minimis” rate of 10% are performed by the NC DHHS Office of the Controller, Cost Analysis and Administration section:

Cost Analysis/Federal Financial Reporting/Administration  
DHHS Office of the Controller  
NC Department of Health and Human Services  
1050 Umstead Dr  
Raleigh, NC 27699-2019  
Phone: 919-855-3696

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

In December 2019, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) was awarded a three-year renewal of the Preschool Development Grant - Birth through Five (PDG B-5), in the amount of \$40.2 million, beginning 2020 through 2022. Administered by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care, the PDG B-5 renewal grant will support North Carolina as it builds upon strategies initiated during the 2019 PDG planning year to strengthen its early childhood education system.

A key priority for the PDG B-5 is *Maximizing Parent and Family Knowledge, Choice, and Engagement*. North Carolina is administering four activities to meet this goal:

- 1) expand universal home visiting services to connect parents to high quality child care and other supports and improve child development knowledge and positive parenting behaviors;
- 2) build family leadership, connections, and active engagement in their children's early learning and development;
- 3) increase local capacity to engage families across systems; and
- 4) expand and improve consumer materials to increase family knowledge about their child and available services.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

In 2019, a State Family Engagement and Leadership Coalition (FELC) was formed through a collaboration of DCDEE and North Carolina Partnership for Children to engage family members and cross-sector representatives of state and local organizations. The FELC created a family engagement framework to support practice improvements, as well as policy and systems change. The framework establishes common definitions and expectations for how early childhood service providers deliver services to and partner with families and other stakeholders. Specifically, the framework is designed to:

- 1) define and identify important family engagement concepts to be applied across early childhood sectors and agencies;
- 2) describe guiding principles and conditions for success for agencies to ensure that diverse families, including families of color, tribal families, families with English as a second language, or families who have a young child with disabilities, have a seat at decision-making tables;
- 3) identify action opportunities to increase effective family engagement and family leadership practices;
- 4) guide a systemic shift in the way services are designed and provided to families and young children across early childhood sectors; and

5) support families in advocating for their children and for systems improvement. The framework is complete and now forms the basis for planning and implementation at the community level through local family engagement (PDG Activity 3.3, *Increasing Local Capacity to Improve and Promote Family Engagement and Leadership*), as well as the next phase of state-level alignment and coordination around family leadership (PDG Activity 3.2, Building Family Engagement and Leadership).

Building from robust planning efforts and development of the framework in 2019 – and in response to the COVID pandemic – a number of state-level family engagement efforts have been developing. An Accelerator Team of state agency partners and family leaders has continued to meet since 2019 and identified the need to better understand the landscape of family engagement opportunities at the state level, as well as highlighting the gap in supports and policies for agencies to support and facilitate family leadership opportunities.

To “maximize parent and family knowledge, choice and engagement in their child’s early learning and development” DCDEE seeks to contract with an entity to implement and evaluate strategies to further develop a **pipeline of family leaders** to bring their voices to systems change work, as well as to establish **pathways of leadership opportunities and support** for family leaders.

**Resources:** An applicant may find the following resources linked below (and/or included as an attachment to this RFA) helpful in preparing a successful application narrative.

- A. The PDG B-5 Renewal Grant Application, outlining planned projects for each of the six required activities, including updating the B-5 Needs Assessment, accessible at [https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Portals/0/documents/pdf/N/NC\\_2019\\_PDG\\_Renewal\\_Grant\\_File.pdf?ver=2020-01-17-143357-720](https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Portals/0/documents/pdf/N/NC_2019_PDG_Renewal_Grant_File.pdf?ver=2020-01-17-143357-720).
- B. The PDG B-5 Needs Assessment accessible at: [https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Portals/0/documents/pdf/N/NC\\_Statewide\\_Birth-5\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_Report\\_Final\\_31120.pdf?ver=2020-04-03-151528-233](https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Portals/0/documents/pdf/N/NC_Statewide_Birth-5_Needs_Assessment_Report_Final_31120.pdf?ver=2020-04-03-151528-233).
- C. The PDG B-5 Strategic Plan, accessible at: [https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Portals/0/documents/pdf/N/NC\\_PDG\\_B-5\\_Strategic\\_Plan.pdf](https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Portals/0/documents/pdf/N/NC_PDG_B-5_Strategic_Plan.pdf).
- D. The North Carolina Early Childhood Action Plan, accessible at <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/about/departments/initiatives/early-childhood/early-childhood-action-plan>.
- E. The Family Engagement and Leadership framework, accessible at [https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Portals/0/documents/pdf/F/FEandL\\_Framework.pdf](https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Portals/0/documents/pdf/F/FEandL_Framework.pdf).

- F. The Family Engagement & Leadership Council's 2019 Final Report, has been posted as an attachment with this document.

### III. **SCOPE OF SERVICES**

The purpose of a contract resulting from this RFA is to build the capacity of early childhood agencies by engaging families as leaders and experts to inform and improve early childhood systems of services, and develop family leadership opportunities and supports.

DCDEE seeks a contractor who will:

- A. Develop and deliver training in collaboration with parent led organization(s) to prepare agencies for welcoming and supporting family leaders. The contractor will:
1. Develop a train-the-trainer program designed to build the capacity of organizations to meaningfully engage families in the planning and systemic improvement of early childhood programs and services. The program will prepare teams of two that include one professional and one parent leader to deliver the training to state and local agencies.
  2. Train 8 training teams of two (one parent and one professional) to conduct in-person and/or live virtual training to prepare agency staff and leaders to support ongoing family leadership.
  3. Ensure the train-the-trainer program aligns with ongoing systems-level training efforts currently underway to maximize family voice and influence in early childhood services. The contractor will partner with the North Carolina Partnership for Children and MomsRising to ensure the train-the-trainer design and delivery aligns with efforts including the PDG B-5 Activity 3.3 *Increasing Local Capacity to Improve and Promote Family Engagement and Leadership*.
  4. Ensure that the training content and design will:
    - i. Feature the NC Early Childhood Family Engagement and Leadership Framework, providing an in-depth review of its definitions of family engagement and leadership, Guiding Principles, and Conditions for Success.
    - ii. Demonstrate the use of self-assessment tools, such as the Center for the Study of Social Policy's Parent Engagement and Leadership Assessment Tool for Agencies to assess an agency's current family engagement practices.
    - iii. Explain why meaningful family engagement is important, demonstrate what true family engagement looks like, and apply effective strategies and practices to get families to the table.
    - iv. Center racial equity and family-centered approaches, as articulated in the NC Early Childhood Family Engagement and Leadership Framework.

- v. Model and allow for the practice and mastery of parent-professional co-facilitation.
  - vi. Include a guidance document for providers on how to invite and welcome family leaders to the table, including guidelines for providing stipends to family leaders for their participation in family engagement and leadership activities.
5. Communicate with the State Family Engagement & Leadership Council's Accelerator Team who will serve in an advisory role on designing the training model's approach and content.
  6. Develop a training plan for the new group of trainers to facilitate family engagement and leadership trainings with early childhood system partners. The training plan must be designed to allow the trainers to deliver the training content either through in-person facilitation or online virtual facilitation. The training plan shall define where trainings would be housed, staffing and resources required.
  7. Develop online modules for the training program to be posted on DCDEE's online professional development platform, Moodle accessible at the following link: <https://www.dcdee.moodle.nc.gov/>. (DCDEE has Moodle TA resources available.)
  8. Collaborate with DCDEE, trainers, and partners to pilot the trainings and modules with small groups of participants. The contractor must utilize a continuous quality improvement approach to evaluate the trainings and modules and incorporate participant feedback to refine the training content and design for large scale implementation.
  9. Ensure sustainability through collaboration with DCDEE, trainers and partners; the training plan must include sustainability strategies to continue trainings beyond the grant period. One strategy must include ongoing dissemination of online modules for the training program which will be posted on DCDEE's online professional development platform, Moodle at: <https://www.dcdee.moodle.nc.gov/>.

*Summary of Deliverables:*

1. Training materials developed for a train-the-trainer program using the Family Engagement & Leadership Framework, to include a guidance document for agencies on inviting and welcoming family leaders.
2. Sixteen (16) parent and professional teams trained as trainers.
3. The training plan for delivering training to early childhood agencies and professionals either in-person or in a virtual format.
4. Online modules of training content to be posted and managed in DCDEE's Moodle professional development platform.



- B. Develop and implement a Family Leadership Virtual Conference and post-conference activities to provide family leaders opportunities to serve in a follow-up engagement opportunity. The contractor will:
1. Develop content and structure to host a virtual conference in November 2021 for an audience of approximately 200 early childhood parents and family members—including a theme with keynotes, workshops and break-outs.
  2. Collaborate with DCDEE and identified key stakeholders in establishing the vision for and design of conference.
  3. Identify presenters within three proposed tracks:
    - i. Systems, Governance, Policy & Advocacy (i.e., NC Child, MomsRising, Think Babies/Early Education Coalition, Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina, National Association for the Education of Young Children, ParentCamp, and Early Childhood Investment Corporation)
    - ii. Community Leadership (i.e., Local Interagency Coordinating Councils, Circle of Parents leaders, local Smart Start Partnerships, PBSNC's Rootle Ambassadors, Exceptional Children's Advocacy Center, and Head Start Policy Councils)
    - iii. Resilient Parenting (i.e., Triple P "Raising Resilient Children", Exceptional Children's Assistance Center, local Smart Start Partnerships, family cafes, Head Start Family Services supports, and public health and home visiting supports)
  4. Gather presentations that include, but are not limited to, the following topics: families as change agents, equity-focused family engagement and leadership, systems-level thinking, governance and policy leadership, parent leaders on committees and boards, family leader peer support, family feedback for program quality improvement, using data for quality improvement, parent-teacher relationships, family-school partnerships, advocating trauma-informed approaches, case studies with examples of family engagement being done well.
  5. Coordinate presenter management by communicating with presenters. The contract will develop and manage a spreadsheet of the identified presenters, their contact information, and workshop topics. The contractor will be responsible for communicating details and expectations for the virtual conference, responding to speaker questions, sending reminders, and providing technology support during the conference.
  6. Market the Family Leadership Virtual Conference by developing sharable content and materials to promote the conference statewide to parents and family of children ages birth through five, utilizing social media channels and state partner organizations identified by DCDEE including but not limited to the Family Engagement and Leadership Coalition, MomsRising, NC Head Start Association, PBSNC, Bright By Text, Exceptional Children's Assistance Center, and public libraries.

7. Coordinate participant/attendee management by preparing and managing a spreadsheet of conference participants/family names, contact information, county of residence, and workshops registration. Establish and implement a process to provide parent participants with attendance stipends, and technology support if needed.
8. Conduct an evaluation of the Family Leadership Virtual Conference through data collection and analysis – utilizing observations, data and feedback from parent/family participants, early childhood stakeholders, and presenters to make continuous quality improvements to the conference content and design. Building on the 2021 virtual conference, utilize observed successes, lessons learned, and opportunities for improvement to develop and implement a plan to conduct additional family leadership learning experiences through Fall 2022.
9. Organize a stakeholder group including DCDEE staff, the Accelerator Team, and parent/family participants of the conference to identify or establish pathways to engage parent/family participants as leaders in state-level early childhood initiatives. Facilitate the development of a document providing a list of opportunities and action steps for state-level early childhood agencies to engage parents as leaders in the planning and development of early childhood program and services.

*Summary of Deliverables:*

1. Family Leadership Virtual Conference held by November 2021 for an audience of at least 200 parents and families.
2. An evaluation report summary analyzing evaluation results and recommendations for future learning experiences.
3. A document providing a list of opportunities and action steps for state-level early childhood agencies to engage parents as leaders in the planning and development of early childhood program and services.

**Project Objectives Aligned with NC PDG B-5 Strategic Plan**

- A. Goal 3: Supportive and supported families and communities: families with babies and toddlers across NC feel supported, are engaged in early learning, and are connected to the resources they need.
  1. Increase the number of families that feel empowered to advocate for their children and are engaged in leadership activities.
- B. GOAL 5: Strengthening NC's mixed-delivery system: NC's comprehensive early childhood system will become more integrated, experience increased capacity to offer technical assistance to families and early childhood professionals, and offer sustained improvements for children, families, and ECE professionals.

1. Improve the expertise of early childhood education (ECE) professionals to support improvements to the ECE system.
2. Build capacity to sustain increased access to services and improvements to NC ECE system.

#### **Intended Outcomes**

- A. Ninety-five percent (95%) of professionals attending trainings will report they have increased knowledge of strategies to engage families as leaders in their work.
- B. Ninety-five percent (95%) of parents/caregivers participating in conferences will report increased confidence in their ability to advocate for their child and/or community.

#### **Estimated Timeline of Outputs:**

- A. By November 30, 2021: Host and evaluate a Virtual Family Leadership Conference for early childhood parents and family members.
- B. By July 31, 2022: Support state-level early childhood initiatives in establishing pathways to engage parents in leadership roles.
- C. By September 1, 2022: Implement and evaluate a training program for state-level agencies on family leadership, having trained a minimum of 16 trainers through a train-the-trainer format. A training plan shall be developed to support the 16 trainers in delivering the training curriculum to state-level agencies, with a plan for sustainability of training strategies beyond the funding of the Preschool Development Grant.

#### **IV. Additional Requirements**

1. **Reports** – Provide data as requested by DCDEE to meet federal reporting requirements and as needed for the state’s PDG B-5 Strategic Plan or PDG Program Performance Evaluation. This includes submitting monthly, quarterly and annual reporting by the deadlines provided by DCDEE in order to meet any submission date required from the federal funder.
2. **Feedback** – Providing feedback at least monthly to DCDEE is required throughout the duration of the grant to contribute to continuous quality improvement and monitor ongoing processes and the progress towards the goals and objectives of the project.
3. **Collaboration/Partnerships** – The applicant may propose cross-sector collaborators and partners to successfully implement the deliverables of this project.

## **V. APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS AND CAPACITY**

Applicants must exhibit comprehensive knowledge of early childhood education (ECE) systems and best practices in family engagement and leadership, a demonstrated ability to develop and execute equity-focused projects, and virtual conference hosting, communications and facilitation expertise. Applicants must be able to work effectively with a variety of ECE and family engagement stakeholders, including state and local agencies. The submission of work products that demonstrate similar or relevant efforts are required.

## **VI. LINE ITEM BUDGET & NARRATIVE**

The applicant will one line-item budget for the work the applicant anticipates completing during the initial budget period of September 15, 2021 through September 14, 2022. The budget must address the cost to complete deliverables outlined in this RFA and include parent stipends to compensate parents for their participation in both the train-the-trainer and Family Leadership Conference activities. A narrative justification must be included for every expense listed in the budget. Each justification should show how the amount on the line-item budget was calculated, and it should be clear how the expense relates to the project's activities. The total for the budget may not exceed \$175,000.

### **Travel Reimbursement Rates**

Mileage reimbursement rates must be based on rates determined by the North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM). Because mileage rates fluctuate with the price of fuel, the OSBM will release the "Change in IRS Mileage Rate" memorandum to be found on OSBM's website when there is a change in this rate.

For other travel related expenses, please refer to the current rates for travel and lodging reimbursement, presented in the chart below. However, please be advised that reimbursement rates periodically change. DCDEE will only reimburse for rates authorized in OSBM's North Carolina Budget Manual or adopted by means of an OSBM Budget Memo. These documents are located here: [https://www.osbm.nc.gov/budman5-travel-policies#TP5\\_1](https://www.osbm.nc.gov/budman5-travel-policies#TP5_1).

### **Current Rates for Travel and Lodging**

<b>Meals</b>	<b>In State</b>	<b>Out of State</b>
Breakfast	\$8.60	\$8.60
Lunch	\$11.30	\$11.30
Dinner	\$19.50	\$22.20
<i>Total Meals Per Diem Per Day</i>	<i>\$39.40</i>	<i>\$42.10</i>

<b>Lodging</b> ( <i>Maximum rate per person, excludes taxes and fees</i> )	\$75.10	\$88.70
<b>Total Travel Allowance Per Day</b>	<b>\$114.50</b>	<b>\$130.80</b>
Mileage	0.56 cents per mile	

## VII. APPLICATION CONTENT & FORMAT

The submitted electronic application must be formatted to print on 8.5 x 11-inch paper with margins of 1 inch, except for the spreadsheets used in the budget template. Line spacing should be single-spaced. Use Calibri or Times New Roman font **only** no smaller than an 11-point font. All proposals must include the following (*\* indicates form included in RFA posting*).

- 1) **Application Checklist\***: Summarizes the application components to be submitted.
- 2) **Application Face Sheet\***: Requires electronic or scanned signature of authorized authority.
- 3) **Proposal Summary**: Provide a brief (3-5 paragraphs) description of the activities the applicant proposes to implement.
- 4) **Introduction to the Applicant Organization/Applicant Qualifications**: Provide a 1-3-page introduction to the applicant's organization, including:
  - The organization's mission, history, and goals;
  - Qualifications, experience, and expertise of key personnel to be assigned to this initiative including up to three work samples; and
  - The organization's experience in the content area specified in the application.
- 5) **Proposal Design, Timeline & Strategies**: Applicants may apply for any or all of the four components listed in Section III. Provide a 5-7-page narrative describing the proposed project design and the activities/tasks as described in Section III that will be accomplished with the available resources. Include as part of the scope of services the major tasks, deliverables, and anticipated dates of completion. Identify the key personnel responsible for each task, by position.
- 6) **Collaborative Partners or Subcontractors**: Provide a 1-3-page narrative describing any collaborative partners or subcontractors the applicant plans to work with to support trainings and conference. Include partner or subcontractor name, address, and nonprofit or for-profit status. Explain the contributions each partner or subcontractor will make toward this initiative, including resources. Attach copies of support letters from collaborative partners or subcontractors, if applicable. Requested attachments will not count toward the applicant's page limitations.

- 7) **Line Item Budget\*, Detailed Budget Narrative, and FTE Sheet\***: Complete and submit a line-item budget for the work the applicant anticipates completing during the initial budget period of September 15, 2021 through September 14, 2022 to not exceed \$175,000. The budget must address the cost to complete deliverables outlined in this RFA and include parent stipends to compensate parents for their participation in both the train-the-trainer and Family Leadership Conference activities. An applicant must complete a proposed budget narrative that explains in detail all line items in the budget worksheet in accordance with the “DCDEE Line Item Budget & Narrative Instructions.” A narrative justification must be included for every expense listed in the budget and each justification should show how the amount on the line item budget was calculated, and it should be clear how the expense relates to the project’s activities. The FTE worksheet is also required as part of this RFA. Please complete the FTE sheet first so that the line item budget will populate Salary/Fringe values in Column C.

## **VIII. SELECTION PROCESS**

The following is a general description of the process for selecting applications for funding for this initiative. A selection committee chosen by DCDEE will review each application submitted. Upon review of each application the selection committee will assign a numerical rating based on the following:

- 1) **Proposal Summary** (Maximum of **10** points): Response must reflect the applicant's understanding of and responsiveness to the Scope of Services described in Section III.
- 2) **Applicant Organization(s)/Applicant Qualifications/Partners** (Maximum of **20** points): Response must reflect the applicant’s history of and capacity for successful completion of family engagement and leadership projects with an equity focus, as well as demonstrated expertise in partnering with family leaders and family led organizations, knowledge of North Carolina’s early childhood education (ECE) mixed delivery system and ability to work effectively with a variety of stakeholders. Collaborative partners or subcontractors, if used, should be qualified and have the capacity to provide the services specified.
- 3) **Proposal Design, Time Line & Strategies** (Maximum of **30** points): Response must reflect how the proposal will allow for the successful completion of described activities. The criteria in Section III must be addressed. The timelines should reflect the activities and strategies that will support completion of the family engagement and leadership activities.
- 4) **Expertise in virtual conference hosting**: (Maximum of **15** points): Response must demonstrate expertise in technology required to host a conference with up to 200 participants, multiple con-current workshops, and break-out room conversations. The proposal must describe capacity to create and manage

communications through web site and social media and conduct online evaluation surveys.

- 5) **Commitment to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion:** (Maximum of **10** points):  
In alignment to North Carolina's commitment to equity of opportunity for all children, the proposal must reflect the applicant's knowledge and application of diversity, equity and inclusion concepts and clearly demonstrate the applicant's experience in employing an equity framework in project development and execution.
- 6) **Line Item Budget\*, Detailed Budget Narrative & FTE Sheet\*:** (Maximum of **15** points):  
Budget must reflect efficient and effective use of financial resources. The proposal must follow all stipulations included in the budget worksheet and narrative instructions. The plan must provide a clear and reasonable justification for all proposed expenditures. The budget total may not exceed \$175,000. Should a carryover or no cost extension be granted to DCDEE by the federal funder to complete PDG activities, the same option will be available to the contractor.

**Maximum Points: 100**

Any attachments must further demonstrate the applicant's capacity to fulfill the requirements for this project as described. Attachments will not count against the applicant's page limitations. The selection committee will submit recommendations to DCDEE based on the selection process described. The Division will make a final selection and notify all applicants of that selection in writing and/or electronically **no later than August 13, 2021**.

**IX. APPLICATION PROCUREMENT PROCESS**

1. Written questions concerning the RFA specifications will be received until the date specified on the cover sheet of this RFA. A summary of all questions and answers will be posted to DCDEE's website (<http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/>) by **July 23, 2021**.
2. **An electronic submission** of the application must be received from each agency or organization. The submission must include an application face sheet with an electronic or scanned signature by an official authorized to bind the agency or organization in a legal contract.
3. All applications must be received by DCDEE via email not later than the date and time specified on the cover sheet of the RFA. **Paper copies or faxed applications will not be accepted.**
4. The date and time of application receipt will be documented by the date and time shown on the email submission received via [DCDEE.PDGContracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:DCDEE.PDGContracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov). Budgets and budget narratives are to be included as part of the application submitted.

5. At its option, the RFA evaluation team may request additional information from any or all applicants for clarification or to support the materials presented in any part of the application. However, agencies and organizations are cautioned that the evaluation team is not required to request clarification; therefore, all applications should be complete and reflect the most favorable terms available from the agency or organization.
6. Applications will be evaluated according to completeness, content, and applicant's documented experience with similar projects, apparent ability of the agencies or organization's staff and cost. The award of a grant to one agency and organization does not mean that the other applications lacked merit but that, all facts considered, the selected application was deemed to provide the best service to the State.
7. Agencies and organizations are cautioned that this is a request for applications, and the funding agency reserves the unqualified right to reject any and all applications when such rejections are deemed to be in the best interest of the funding agency.
8. **Application Process Summary Dates**

July 7, 2021	Request for Applications issued.
July 16, 2021	All questions due via email no later than 5 pm.
July 16, 2021	Interested applications submit <b>optional</b> Notice of Intent no later than 5 pm.
July 23, 2021	Answers to Questions posted to the DCDEE website no later than 5 pm.
August 6, 2021	Applications must be received via email no later than 5 pm.
August 13, 2021	Successful applicant will be notified.
September 15, 2021	Estimated contract start date.

## **X. General Information on Submitting Applications**

### **1. Award or Rejection**

All complete and timely submitted applications will be evaluated and awards will be made to the agencies or organizations whose combination of budget and service capabilities are deemed to be in the best interest of the funding agency. The funding agency reserves the unqualified right to reject any or all offers if determined to be in its best interest. The successful applicant will be notified by August 13, 2021.

### **2. Cost of Application Preparation**

Any cost incurred by an agency or organization in preparing or submitting an application is the agency or organization's sole responsibility; the funding agency will not reimburse any agency or organization for any pre-award costs incurred.



**3. Elaborate Applications**

Elaborate applications in the form of brochures or other presentations beyond what is necessary to present a complete and effective application are not desired.

**4. Oral Explanations**

The funding agency will not be bound by oral explanations or instructions given at any time during the competitive process or after awarding the grant.

**5. Reference to Other Data**

Only information that is received in response to this RFA will be evaluated; reference to information previously submitted will not be considered.

**6. Titles**

Titles and headings in this RFA are for convenience only and shall have no binding force or effect.

**7. Form of Application**

Each application must be submitted utilizing the forms provided by DCDEE, and upon award, these forms will be incorporated into the funding agency's Performance Agreement (contract).

**8. Exceptions**

All applications are subject to the terms and conditions outlined herein. All responses will be controlled by such terms and conditions. The attachment of other terms and conditions by any agency or organization may be grounds for rejection of that agency or organization's application.

**9. Advertising**

In submitting its application, agencies and organizations agree not to use the results of the selection process as part of any news release or commercial advertising without prior written approval of DCDEE.

**10. Right to Submitted Material**

All responses, inquiries, or correspondence relating to or in reference to the RFA, and all other reports, charts, displays, schedules, exhibits, and other documentation submitted by the agency or organization will become the property of the funding agency when received.

**11. Competitive Offer**

Pursuant to the provision of N.C.G.S. 143-54, and under penalty of perjury, the signer of any application submitted in response to this RFA thereby certifies that this application has not been arrived at collusively or otherwise in violation of either Federal or North Carolina antitrust laws.

**12. Agency and Organization's Representative**

Each agency or organization shall submit with its application the name, address, and telephone number of the person(s) with authority to bind the agency or organization and answer questions regarding the application.

**13. Subcontracting**

Agencies and organizations may propose to subcontract portions of work provided that their applications clearly indicate the scope of the work to be subcontracted, and to whom.

**14. Proprietary Information**

Trade secrets or similar proprietary data which the agency or organization does not wish disclosed to other than personnel involved in the evaluation will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by NCAC TO1: 05B.1501 and G.S. 132-1.3 if identified as follows: Each page shall be identified in boldface at the top and bottom as "CONFIDENTIAL." Any section of the application that is to remain confidential shall also be so marked in boldface on the title page of that section.

**15. Participation Encouraged**

Pursuant to Article 3 and 3C, Chapter 143 of the North Carolina General Statutes and Executive Order No. 77, the funding agency invites and encourages participation in this RFA by businesses owned by minorities, women and the disabled including utilization as subcontractor(s) to perform functions under this Request for Applications.

**16. Gifts Ban**

N.C.G.S. 133-32 and Executive Order 24 prohibit the offer to or acceptance by any State Employee of any gift from anyone with a contract with the State, or from any person seeking to do business with the State. By execution of any response to this request, agencies and organizations attest, for the entire organization and its employees or agents, that no such gift has been offered, accepted, or promised by any employees of the organization.

**17. Contract/Funds Disbursement**

DCDEE will issue a contract to the recipients of the grant that will include their application. Expenditures may begin upon receipt of a fully executed contract and not before that point. To receive compensation, following contract submission and agreement, the selected applicants must submit a monthly reimbursement request to the Division for all expenses incurred.

**18. Audit**

Please be advised that successful applicants may be required to have an audit in accordance with N.C.G.S. 143C-6-22 and N.C.G.S. 143C-6-23 as applicable to the agency's status.

There are 3 reporting levels which are determined by the total direct grant receipts from all State agencies in the entity's fiscal year:

Level 1: Less than \$25,000

Level 2: At least \$25,000 but less than \$500,000

Level 3: \$500,000 or more. Level 3 grantees are required to submit a "Yellow Book" audit done by a CPA.

Only Level 3 grantees may include audit expenses on the budget. Audit expenses should be prorated based on the ratio of the grant to the total pass-through funds received by the entity.

**19. Additional Documentation to Include with Application**

All applicants are required to include documentation of their tax identification number. Those applicants which are private nonprofit agencies are to include a copy of an IRS determination letter regarding the agency's 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. (This letter normally includes the agency's tax identification number, so it would also satisfy that documentation requirement.)

**20. Federal Certifications**

Agencies or organizations receiving federal funds are required to execute Federal certifications regarding non-discrimination, Drug-Free Workplace, Environmental Tobacco Smoke, Debarment, Lobbying, and Lobbying Activities.

**21. System for Award Management Database (SAM)**

All grantees receiving federal funds must be actively registered in the federal government's System for Award Management (SAM) database, or be willing to complete the registration process in conjunction with the award (see [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov)). To maintain an active SAM record, the record must be updated no less than annually.

**22. Additional Documentation Prior to Contract Execution**

Contracts will require additional documentation prior to contract execution. After the award announcement, agencies will be contacted about providing the following documentation:

- a. A completed and signed letter from the agency's Board President/Chairperson identifying individuals authorized to sign contracts.
- b. A completed and signed letter from the agency's Board President/Chairperson identifying individuals authorized to sign expenditure reports.
- c. Documentation of the agency's DUNS number. Documentation consists of a copy of communication (such as a letter or email correspondence) from Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) which indicates the agency or organization's legal name, address, and DUNS

number. In lieu of a document from D&B, a copy of the agency or organization's SAM record is acceptable.

- d. If your agency does not have a DUNS number, please use the D&B online registration (<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>) to receive one free of charge. (DUNS is the acronym for the Data Universal Numbering System developed and regulated by D&B.)
- e. Contracts with private non-profit agencies require additional documentation prior to contract execution. After the award announcement, private non-profit agencies will be contacted about providing the following documentation:
  - i. A completed, signed, and notarized statement which includes the agency's Conflict of Interest Policy.
  - ii. A completed, signed, and notarized page certifying that the agency has no overdue tax debts.
- f. All grantees receiving funds through the State of North Carolina are required to execute Contractor Certifications Required by North Carolina Law. Contractor Certifications should **NOT** be generated, signed or returned with application.

**Note:** At the start of each calendar year, all agencies with current DCDEE contracts are required to update their contract documentation. These agencies will be contacted a few weeks prior to the due date and will be provided the necessary forms and instructions.

### **23. Registration with Secretary of State**

Private non-profit applicants must also be registered with the North Carolina Secretary of State to do business in North Carolina, or be willing to complete the registration process in conjunction with the execution of the contract documents. (See [www.secretary.state.nc.us/corporations](http://www.secretary.state.nc.us/corporations).)

### **24. Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Data Reporting Requirement**

The Contractor shall complete and submit to the Division, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Data Reporting Requirement form within 10 State Business Days when awarded \$25,000 or more in federal funds.

### **25. Salary Limitation**

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018, (Division H, Title II, Sec. 202), limits the salary amount that may be awarded and charged to ACF grants and cooperative agreements. Award funds issued under this announcement may not be used to pay the salary of an individual at a rate in excess of Executive Level II. The Executive Level II salary of the "Rates of Pay for the Executive Schedule" is \$189,600. This amount reflects an individual's base salary exclusive of fringe benefits and any income that an individual may be permitted to earn outside of the duties of the applicant organization. This salary limitation also applies to subawards and subcontracts under an ACF grant or cooperative agreement.

The Appropriations Act of 2017 (N.C. Session Law 2017-57), which was adopted by reference in 2019 budget legislation, SECTION 6.4 limits the State funds used for the annual salary of any individual employee of a nonprofit organization to \$120,000.

Per the statute *“No more than one hundred twenty thousand dollars (\$120,000) in State funds, including any interest earnings accruing from those funds, may be used for the annual salary of any individual employee of a nonprofit organization.*

- *The term “State funds” is defined by law in N.C.G.S. 143C-1-1(d)(25): Any moneys including federal funds deposited in the State treasury except moneys deposited in a trust fund or agency fund as described in G.S. 143C-1-3.*
- *HHSAR 331.101.70(b) Part 353: The salary rate limitation does not restrict the salary that an organization may pay an individual working under a Department of Health and Human Services contract or order; it merely limits the portion of that salary that may be paid with contract funds.*
- *The salary cap is for a 12-month period. That means that the cap amount is reduced for the 9-month academic period or 3 months contract period.*
- *The cap is for a 1.0 FTE. That means the cap is proportionally reduced for a .75 or .50 FTE.”*

#### **APPLICATION CHECKLIST**

The following items must be included in the application. Please assemble the application in the following order in the format identified in Section VII:

- ☐ Application Checklist – Item 1
- ☐ Application Face Sheet – Item 2
- ☐ Proposal Summary/Design/Evaluation Plan – Item 3
- ☐ List of Subcontractors – Item 4
- ☐ Line Item Budget & FTE Worksheet – Item 5
- ☐ Indirect Cost Rate Approval Letter (if applicable)
- ☐ Letters of Commitment or Statements of Support – Item 6
- ☐ IRS Tax Status Documentation – Item 7
  - IRS letter documenting your organization’s tax identification number
    - OR
  - IRS determination letter regarding your organization’s 501(c)(3) tax exempt status for private nonprofits